

The 1st Disaster Volunteer in Turkey Report

Jesus Christ is not only for Christianity.

December 6, 2020
Kobe International Sustaining Organization
Director Iwamura Yoshio.

Theme Scripture - Psalm 90:3-6

“You turn people back to dust, saying, ‘Return to dust, you mortals.’ A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night. Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—they are like the new grass of the morning: In the morning it springs up new, but by evening it is dry and withered.”

<Introduction>

At around 11:50 am on October 30, 2020, a magnitude 6.9 earthquake attacked İzmir, Turkey, and Samos, Greece (Acts 20:15). The tsunami also escalated more damages. 117 people in Turkey and 2 people in Samos were dead. İzmir was once called Smyrna, Ephesus in the 1st century AD. Ephesus was a port city of trade, commercial intercourse, and exchanging area between Asia and Europe¹.

Losing precious people of our own is great stress from ancient times². Due to the coronavirus catastrophe, when it comes to whether long-term hospitalization is possible, I have to say that Japan’s medical system is extremely weak. With Japan’s unique “medical service fee system” that have started in the early 2000s, the problem of shortage of doctors and nurses, weakness of the medical system have been becoming more serious. Hearsay is wide-spreading that “You will be discharged from the hospital after three months”³. This system determines human health, treatment, welfare, and each medical practice by scoring. So to speak, at the medical examination, the diagnosis of the medical status from data which shows on the computer screen, rather than facing the patient directly by using a stethoscope. The curse of "numerical belief" is widespread everywhere, such as in elementary school grades, deviation score of an entrance examination, and corporate performance. Even in the medical field, complicated clerical work to convert a consideration (= amount of fee) is increasing. Under the current system, if hospitalization costs are unprofitable, a patient will be discharged sooner. Then, the income of public hospitals will decline eventually. Not only in hospitals, but also in universities, professors manage students numerically rather than carrying specialized research, and they are busy with complicated paperwork tasks demands from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology and to put their energy into governance. I think that the influence of René Descartes [1596-1650], the father of ger‘*Technizismus*’, inherits the gene of thought that promotes efficiency and rationalization after the Meiji Restoration in Japan⁴.

¹ The most important relay center where precious stone, fragrances, spices, silks such as grains, perfumes, perfumes, amber, and rare animals are imported from Central Africa, India, and the Baltic countries and shipped to Rome. Koester, H. 1998. *History, Culture, and Religion of the Hellenistic Age. Introduction to the New Testament*. Inoue Daiei (Translator). Shinchi Shobo. 430.

² 2012. *Stress magnitude (Level of accumulation)*. Kobe City Mental Health and Welfare Center

³ Nakai, T. *From hospice/palliative care and home care in daily life: How do we face the question without an answer*. Hanshin Religious Society. November. 1.

⁴ Haruna, H. 2018. *Introduction to Christian Philosophy-Critique of Transcendental Reason-*. Kyobunkwan. 62. Haruna analyzes the influence of Descartes’s Western philosophy that “Nature is the thing that can be calculated and manipulated”.

Iwamura, Y. 2020. *Life in Inconvenience*. Chugai Nippoh. November 13.

Probably the medical measures of coronavirus are also behind the real situation.

In Turkey, like many countries such as Japan and Western countries, the “number of infected people” including those who received a positive result for PCR without any symptoms was announced on November 25, during our visit. The resulting number of infected people was 28,351⁵. The number is the 1st in Europe and the 3rd in the world. The number of deaths per day announced on the 25th was 168, and it was the highest ever. A cumulative sum of deaths become 12,840. The schools were once again started online lectures for all grades, and the restaurants were restricted to open for only takeaway and delivery service. The cinema theaters and soccer fields were closed.

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⁵ 2020. *The number of new COVID-19 infected people in Turkey: The number of infections increased sharply after revising the statistics of positive confirmation.* NHK. November 26.

Part 1

<Report>

(1) Turkey earthquake and tsunami

a. What is Turkey?

Turkey exists in an Islamic world. Breaking news of the earthquake was announced on October 30. The BBC reported that a magnitude of 7.0 occurred in İzmir and 24 people were dead and 804 were injured. Turkey is the land of earthquake same as Japan. There was no definite information on whether international flights could reach Turkey from Japan and return to Japan because of the coronavirus catastrophe. When “the Ertuğrul Frigate Disaster (1890)”, a warship of the Ottoman Empire (current Turkey) sank off at the coast of Kushimoto town Wakayama Prefecture, 69 people were rescued by the Japanese people and received treatments at a hospital in Cape Wada of Kobe, and they returned to their home from Kobe port. In return for this courtesy, Turkish Airlines rescued more than 200 Japanese who were left in Tehran during the Iran-Iraq War (1985). Therefore, Turkey has a deep relationship with Kobe City⁶.

b. Why in Turkey?

I can hear the moans of orphans under the debris and children who lost their parents. We were husband and wife without children, so we adopted a child and raised him. However, my real mother's love was far greater, and I could not do anything like a father to him. I was the worst husband and father who didn't care about his family. When our adopted child returned to his mother, there was no comfort to replace our feelings of forlornness in the empty space of our hearts, because of the sufferings from “*Shikuhakku* (四苦八苦: Eight pains on Buddhism), *Shyoroubyoshi* (生老病死: birth, aging, sickness, and death), *Aibetsuriku* (愛別離苦: Departure or separation from one's loved ones)”. My wife Kayoko almost lost herself. We went out to a nearby cheap hot spring place like a national residence together. However, even we saw the relaxing scenery of nature, the humanity of the people we met, and eat delicious food, our hearts never be filled. The days spent by the three of us as a family was a golden age in our lives. When I asked Kayoko, “When was the most enjoyable time in your life?”, she clearly answered that “Well see...there are many, but the time we, three of us spent time in the congregation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.” I was surprised. It was the time when we were physically at the edge after doing evangelism of Jehovah's Witnesses, which is said to be heretical. Probably, we had been freed from the shackles of door-to-door evangelism visits. As the wife of the leader, she supported me to the best of my ability. Above all, I think that the visit to the United States by the three of us was the best reward for her from God.

c. Heart to orphans

For me and my wife, we noticed that we become calm when we see children of similar age to our adopted child who is working hard at sports day, bazaar acting, and studying. We have started to participate in every activity of “*Uri Hakkyo*(우리 학교: Korean word for ‘our school’)”, which exist on the south side of Nada Station in Kobe City with our church members. I feel like students at *Chōsen gakkō* (Korean school

⁶ 2019. *Kobe Shimbun*. December 20.

sponsored by North Korea) as our own children. Kayoko's feeling was sensitive to the crying of orphans in Ishinomaki City Miyagi Prefecture, and children in the disaster areas of Vanuatu and Nepal in 2015. Not only in the disaster affected areas in Japan but also overseas, I could feel Kayoko's serious prayers from home for us, so that I can serve to work safely. In a mysterious way, I began to meet with the good people who build orphanages and care for children in other countries by crossing the borders.

(2) Islamic world

a. Was there any danger?

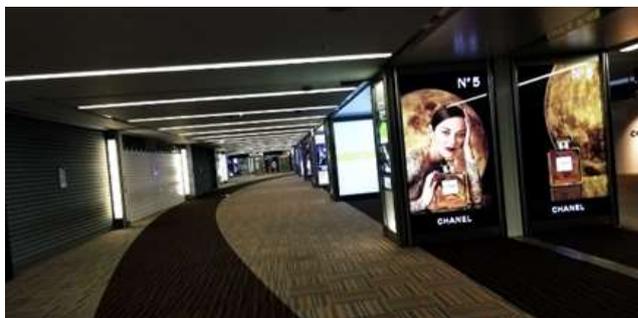
Turkey exists in an Islamic world. We have been exposed to flood-like coverage of terrorism such as "ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant)" in Syria for several years. Generally, the Japanese have the image that "Muslims are scary". Moreover, by the surge in the number of infected people through the third wave of the COVID-19, many people think that they cannot even go abroad. Moreover, since I am a pastor of a Christian church, general Japanese think that I have a hostile relationship against Islam. The pastors of the same Christian churches' response to me was that like I was a reckless one, as soon as they heard that I was going to visit Turkey.

b. Departure

There was no flight from Kansai to Narita Airport. We needed to reserve flights directly with airlines in Doha and Istanbul. We were not sure whether overseas flights from Narita Airport were available. We went to Narita by train from Haneda Airport, but we didn't see anyone look like an overseas traveler from the window. We were not sure whether flights are operating or not, but we just did it on the spot. The airport was very quiet like a ghost town and few people at duty-free shops and the boarding counter.



Terminal 2, Narita International Airport. November 22, 2020.



Duty-Free Shop, Narita International Airport. November 22, 2020.

On September 9, 2019, when we visited Indonesia for the 4th volunteer, due to the influence of Typhoon No.15, many flights at Narita Airport were delayed for arrivals and departures, so it was hard to walk through inside since many overseas travelers were sleeping on the floor. This time, no one knew if a flight would really take off even at the scheduled time. Only Qatar Airways was operating and 50 people were on a plane that normally for 300 people. Also, we were instructed to wear a face shield provided by Qatar Airways.



c. Arrival in Turkey

If you see the Mediterranean Sea from the airplane window, you are in Istanbul. There was only one foreigner line at customs. We transferred to domestic Pegasus Airlines 7 times. When we completed every procedure at Izmir Airport, we felt to be released. At international cities where Europe and Asia exchange, you definitely see Chinese and Korean businesspeople in suits.

But this time is, there were only the Turks. I lost my words because I had a hard time to communicating in English. I felt as if I had landed on another nebula. It takes 45 minutes from the airport to downtown. I was overwhelmed by the city of Izmir, look from the train window, since it is the 3rd largest city with wide modern roads and high buildings that are more than Beirut in Lebanon. Turkey, which is founded in 1923, has made a leap forward to become a major power in the Middle East⁷.

Since it is a volunteer visit, it has nothing to do with luxury hotels, rich meals, and comfort. Normally, we head to the poor slums first and spend our time in a sleeping bag. However, only this time, we made a reservation directly from Kobe to an inexpensive apartment near the disaster area. We cook for ourselves. After we putting our luggage such as handmade masks in the room, we immediately went out to the disaster-affected area, Bayrakli.



It is the real fact to make us realize that no matter how we pursue comfortableness in our modern time's life, we are powerless.

Extreme accomplishment for advances in transportation, telecommunication, and civil engineering technology requires us that we must learn to pay a great price for that.

Bayrakli. November 23, 2020.

⁷ Imai, K. 2017. *Modern History of Turkey*. Chuko Shinsho. 2-4.

Turkey is one of the G20 member countries. She served as a chair of the G20 in 2015.

High buildings had destroyed, and there were cautious attention signs in Turkish. The guards were watching so that people do not enter a dangerous zone.

(3) Be with orphans

a. Visiting of evacuation centers

On the morning of November 24, we started to go out after having a quick breakfast with bread, yogurt, tomatoes, olives, and tea. By walking for about 45 minutes, we reached the evacuation center for those who lost their homes by the earthquake. We asked if there are any orphans.



Aşık Veysel Evacuation Center.

November 24, 2020.



Islamic priests providing spiritual care at Evacuation Center. November 24, 2020.

The care for people's hearts who lost their home, family, and work, was lean to religious people not to specialists. For "cure (treatment)", doctors were stationed at the evacuation center.



It is the evacuation center for earthquake disaster. For Children, even how difficult is the situation, the place will be a playground. However, if there is no food anymore, Children will do whatever the way that they can overcome their hunger. The responsibility of adults is big.



Children are cheerful even in a difficult situation. and welcome Japanese people who they have never seen before. They feel happiness for handmade masks from Japan.

b. Courtesy visit to Mr. Tunç Soyer, the collective Mayor of İzmir

Our primary purpose of the visit is to build a nursing home for orphans. We contacted Kobe the collective Mayor of İzmir Tunç Soyer to ask about the situation in İzmir city. We explained our purpose, schedule, and the history of Kobe International Sustaining Organization and asked for a face-to-face meeting. I cannot speak Turkish, so we communicated in English.



Fortunately, Ido Toshizō, Governor of Hyogo Prefecture, and Hisamoto Kizō, Mayor of Kobe, entrusted their letter to us.

Several media companies were waiting for the arrival of the volunteer group from Japan. Under ordinary circumstances, we should visit the governmental office by wearing ties, suits, and polished shoes. However, we have excused those manners because Kobe International Sustaining Organization has been building orphan houses all over the world.

We heard the details of the damage from Mayor Soyer, and were able to exchange talking about the importance of education regarding restoration from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, and the 2016 Kumamoto and Ōita Earthquakes.

c. Meeting with orphans

We have started donation activities on November 3. 1 million yen is required to build the orphan's facility in İzmir. We ask for the cooperation of everyone in Japan. We are also looking for five foster parents who will support 3,000 yen a month for orphan's education. The meeting with the orphan brothers became our foothold for the 2nd Turkish Disaster Volunteer. Initially, we were planning to return via Manila, but we received a phone call from Doha to tell us that there is a direct flight from Doha to Narita Airport. Therefore, we had to go to the airport four hours earlier than our original plan. So, we didn't have time to buy any souvenirs at İzmir.



Little Eref (4 years old) was kept holding me and would not let go. Probably, she misses her father. November 24, 2020.



An orphan Mehmet Cavdar (18 years old) lives with her 13-years old brother Melih, November 24, 2020.

We canceled Pegasus Airlines and got Turkish Airlines vacant seats. We flew to Istanbul and filled the time for four hours there and transited in Doha. Since we had to wait for a long time for transit, the airline companies especially let us enter the lounge for limited members, and we had a light meal. Although we arrived at Narita Airport on the evening of November 26, all passengers took 5-6 hours for the test at the quarantine station. Thanks to our sleeping bag, we were able to rest anywhere. Moreover, we were thankful that we were picked up by the organization's car, Toyota HiAce. I thank God that everything was so smooth and it was like a lie because we thought that both entry and exit routes could be impossible.

Part 2

(1) What kind of place is İzmir?

a. What is Ephesus?

Ephesus was a colonial city of the Ionian in the 11th century BC but was subordinated to the Media Persian Empire by Cyrus II of Persia in 546 BC. In 334 BC, Alexander the Great [356-323 BC] was educated by the philosopher Aristotle [384-322 BC]. He defeated Darius III of Persia and built the Greek Empire.

Subsequently, Ephesus was occupied by Roman troops and became the capital of the Roman province of Asia in 133 BC, prospering as the largest commercial city in Asia Minor⁸. The Caystrus River, which flows through the city of Ephesus, was required to constantly excavate the sediment that accumulated on the river bed, like the Kuma River and Kawabe River in Kumamoto Prefecture⁹.

The Temple of Artemis in the city was rebuilt in the 4th century BC and had 18 meters high 127 Ionic columns¹⁰. It was one of the world's seven wonders. The 15-meter-high Artemis statue has many breasts as a symbol of fertility. Still today, miniatures of statues are sold at souvenir shops.

Paul was Jewish but acquired Roman citizenship in 44 AD. Two Jewish consuls, Marcus Antonius and Publius Cornelius Dolabella convened the Jewish Senate and apply for approval from Roman emperor Augustus for Roman citizenship and exemption from military service, and it was admitted¹¹.

Ephesus became the base of Paul's ministry for about three years from August, 52 AD to October 55 AD. (Acts 20:31).

b. What is Diaspora?

The Kingdom of Israel in the north was broke up after being destroyed by Sargon II of the Neo-Assyrian Empire in 722 BC¹². (2 Kings 17:6) The separated foreign Jews were called to be the Diaspora Gk **διασπορα** *deesporah*¹³. They were scattered in other places out of Palestine. Most of the Jews from Northern Israel existed and had their own “Archons (rulers)” and senates by centering around Greek-speaking synagogues and build a Jewish community that was given complete self-governing rights. One million people were dispersed in Egypt, Asia Minor (mainly Turkey), and Mesopotamia¹⁴. (John 7:35, Jacob 1: 1, I Peter 1:1) Josephus records that already the Jews had entered all polis, and it was difficult to find a place without the Jews in 86-87 AD¹⁵. They had lived 700 years at Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, and Pamphylia that located in Turkey, which was a new land. Therefore, they lost their ability to communicate by listening and speaking in Hebrew. Even among the same Jews, there are Hebrew-speaking Jews “**Εβραῖοι**

⁸ 1996. New Catholic Encyclopedia I. New Catholic Encyclopedia Compilation Committee, Research association. 823.

⁹ Bruce, Frederic F. 1993. *Commentary on the Book of the Apostle*. 408.

¹⁰ Pritchard, James B. 1993. *Atlas of the Bible*. Shinkyō Publishing. 175.

¹¹ Josephus, F. 2000. *Antiquities of the Jews. Vol.4*. Chikuma Shobo. 313-318.

¹² Noth, M. 1950. *Geschichte Israel*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

(1983. Higuchi Susumu [Translator]. The Board of Publications The United Church of Christ in Japan. 330)

Finegan, J. 1951. *Light from the Ancient Past: The Archeological Background of the Hebrew Christian Religion Vol.1*. Princeton University Press. 208-210.

Finegan, Jack. 1961. *Light from the Ancient Past: the archeological background of Judaism and Christianity*.

Takahito, Prince Mikasa (Translator). Iwanami Shoten. 220-221.

¹³ Verb “διασπεύρω” *diaspeiro* means “intersperse”. (Acts 8:1,4,11-19). 1993. *Das Selbstverständnis der jüdischen Diaspora*. Leiden Brill. 73-88.

¹⁴ Boer, H.R. 1987. *A Short History of the Early Church*. Yasuo Shiono (Translator). Kyobunkwan.

¹⁵ *Antiquities of the Jews. Vol.4. ibid.*,283-284.

hebraioi”, and Greek-speaking Jew “Ἑλληνισταί *hellenistai* Hellenists” (Acts 6:1)¹⁶. Not everyone was familiar with Torah from an early age, and could not read the Old Testament scrolls at the 13-year-old ritual of Bar mitzvah. On the day of Pentecost, which is said to be the “50th days” from the day Christ was executed, the Jews of the diaspora were also gathering in the temple of Jerusalem (Acts 2:9-10).

c. The destruction of Jerusalem – the end of the world.

Jesus Christ was executed in Jerusalem around 30 AD. About 40 years after that, the Christians in Nazareth, mainly in Jerusalem, had a conflict with the Jews. The Ochlos (people) that Jesus was most interested in were those who could not engage in production, those sick, those with mentally and physically challenging, and those who were displaced from their own hometown. In other words, they are “abandoned people”, outcaste people who had no choice but to walk by begging. Therefore, they were treated as disgusting one by Jewish religious leaders, the Jewish community who hold vested interests, and law scholars. Jacob, the first director of the congregation in Jerusalem testified. As it is said, “chosen those who are poor” in “Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?” (James 2:5). Honda Tetsuro, who advocates the theology of liberation in Kamagasaki, says that it does not mean to “make the poor people rich in faith” but they became “worthy people to inherit the Kingdom of equal God”, from the original Greek text¹⁷. Christ gave revelation as “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ a spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— 16then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. (Matthew 24:15-16, Daniel 9:26-27)”¹⁸ In 66 AD, Syrian Governor Gaius Cestius besieged Jerusalem. But he withdrew from there even Jerusalem was almost fallen. The reason is still unknown. Those Christians who kept the message of Jesus in their mind escaped to Asia Minor direction along mountains from Jerusalem¹⁹. The “Dead Sea Scrolls” translation committee said that in 68 AD, the facilities of the Qumran Community were destroyed before the Roman army attack, while the Jerusalem Church, which was established around 30 AD that was in a Christian leadership position, had moved to Pella on the eastern part of the Jordan River shortly before the Roman military attack²⁰. About 1.1 million Jews were killed and 97,000 were sold as slaves. (Deuteronomy 28:68)²¹

¹⁶ Arai, 1971. *Early Christianity and Gnosticism* Iwanami Shoten. 385-386.

¹⁷ Honda, T. 2009. *Kamagasaki and Gospel-God stand with the smallest one*. Iwanami Shoten. 96-97.

¹⁸ Antiochus IV Epiphanes, a man from more than 2000 years ago who is considered as “the abomination that causes desolation”, and Gessius Florus in 66AD executed ungodly acts in the temple. “The abomination that causes desolation” (שְׁקִיטַת מְשׁוּמִים *shqutz mshumm* in Hebrew [Daniel 11:31, 12:11], βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως *bdelugma tes eremosews* in Greek [the First Book of Maccabees 1:54, Matthew 24:15], and *shqutz mshumm bdelugma tes eremosews*) did something bad in the temple. Gessius Florus sent people to the “Holy [temple] treasure” and take away 17 taranto from there under the excuse of presenting it or Caesar. Josephus, F. 1985. *The Jewish War: Flavius Josephus's Books of the History of the Jewish War against the Romans*. Toki Kenji (Translator). 70.

¹⁹ 1986. *History of Eusebius of Caesarea I*. Hada Gouhei (Translator). Yamamoto Shoten. 139.

Before the war [against Roma], the people of the church in Jerusalem were ordered to leave the city and live in the city Pella in Perea by the decree given to the devout people of the land through revelation. Then, the believers of Christ moved there from Jerusalem, thus the Jewish's first capital and the entire Jewish land completely abandoned by the holy people.

Hippolytos. 2018. *Church Father's Collection 19: The Philosophumena*. Onuki Takashi (Translator). Kyobunkwan. 29-27, 30-32.; Jaffe, D (ed). 2010. *Studies in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*. Leyden, Brill. 107-138.

Iwamura, Y. 1996. *Magazine Megusuri*. No.3. 6.

²⁰ Katsumura, H. 2019. *The Dead Sea Scrolls X: Wisdom Literature*. Pneumasha. 11-12.

²¹ Josephus, F. 1985. *The Jewish War: Flavius Josephus's Books of the History of the Jewish War against the Romans*. Toki Kenji (Translator). 281.

Before conversion, Paul was the “killer (Homo necans)²²” who killed the first martyr, Stefano. A month ago, an earthquake occurred at Ephesus, Smyrna, and current İzmir, where Paul was most active. Turkey, formerly the Ottoman Empire, became the center of the Islamic world in the Middle East and cannot take our eyes away from it²³.

(2) From a binary opposition to the original text of the Bible

a. Standards of the Primitive Christian Group

Paul was persecuted and looked at coldly by fellow Jews, Greeks of Asia Minor, and Romans governors from Rome, and was never welcomed. The purpose of the missionary trip was to share the gospel, not the conversion of others. In Judaism, “circumcision/bris” was the initiation of the joining. “Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” (Acts 15:1)

On the other hand, what did people who met Christ on their initiation, not doing “circumcision”?

Constantine the Great [Constantine I, 280-337] officially recognized the way of Christ in the Edict of Milan (313 AD). In 392, Theodosius the Great declared Christianity as the state church of the Roman Empire.

Early Christianity was made up of poor people living outside the castle gates. Ecclesia (gatherings, churches) was located in a cave that was different from the city and the residence of the citizens inside of the castle gate. There were no more than 50 participants at each Ecclesia. The people who gathered there were not concerned about whether to choose “circumcision” or “baptism”. It was around the 3rd and 4th centuries when “baptism” became an official entrance ceremony. The Latin rites, the seven major sacraments including Mass and Holy Communion, as defined by the Early Church Fathers. The religious power map that separates the “dividing wall”, which are “circumcision” or “baptism”, had spread again to the Mediterranean coast.

(Ephesians 2:14)

Jesus Christ did not give baptize. Paul, who made his first, second, and third missionary trips in Asia Minor, was not interested in “baptizing” neither. In the gospel, death and resurrection of Christ was the main idea. (I Corinthians 15:1-3) Beside “death”, “bury”, and “resurrection”, everything is optional. “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.” (I Corinthians 1:17)

Originally, baptism is the Greek word “**βαπτίζω**” *baptidzo*. The intention of original meaning is “sink oneself deep in”, “sink oneself from the tip of the head to the toes of the feet”, and it is “to let rethink from the bottom”. The Greek word “wash, cleanse” is “**λούω**” *louo* (Acts 9:37)” and it’s different from “purify / **ἀγνίζω**” *hagnidzo* (John 11:55, Acts 21:24-26)”. Therefore, baptism is not a ritual of cleanliness in a fixed form, and that is not just washing. Instead of “baptism”, it is to “repent (verb **μετανοέω** *metanoeho* [μετά *meta*/chance + νοῶ *noo*/think])”, that is, it asks for “changing the viewpoint”. It is “the logic of denial” (Mark 1:15). “*metanoeho*” appears 33 times in the New Testament. Paul demonstrated the noun form of “**μετάνοια**” *metanoia*” 22 times in the New Testament²⁴.

²² Iwamura, Y. 2016. *Mourning of Christian – the modern view of life and death*. The Japanese Society for The Study of Prayer, Salvation, and Heartmind. 10.

²³ Sasaki, Y. 2012. *For the next 50 years, the world will revolve centering on Turkey*. PRESIDENT Inc. 218-220.

²⁴ Iwamura, Y. 2009. *Christianity and Death Penalty*. Terra People Association. Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. 6.

b. Asia is the primitive Christ community

Can we say that the history of Christianity is 2,000 years? There is no word of “Christianity (Christianismos)” in the Bible. We have a preconceived idea that Christianity departed from Europe. However, the Arab orthodox of the Middle East, which was persecuted by the Christian world linked to political power, has a history of 2,000 years. Even today in the 21st century, it is still widespread in Syria, Turkey, and Egypt. From the Greek word **οἰκουμένη** *oikoumenay* (meaning “the world inhabited by humans”), the English word “ecumenical” was made. “Ecumenicity” is a noun form of “ecumenical”²⁵). The “world inhabited by humans” is the “whole world”. “*oikoumenay*” is derived from “**οἶκος** *oykos* (house)”. The earth can be said to be the “house” of God. In the Early Church of the first century AD, the gospel was proclaimed to “the whole world (**ὅλη τῇ οἰκουμένη** *hole te oikoumene*)”. “The whole world” in “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” means that “the whole world” of Caesar Augustus [63 BC-41AD] (Luke 2:1). The temple in Jerusalem collapsed in 70 AD, and there were no more churches left throughout the land of Judaism (Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria) (Acts 1:8). It refers to the territories of “the whole world”, such as current Turkey (Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia), Egypt, Libya, and Rome. (Acts 2:9-10) By Paul, Philip, and Timothy, it extended to “all over the world”. (Romans 10:18, I Timothy 3:16). Thus, Paul testified. “The true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world (**ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ** *en panti to kosmos* [means in the collective world, the universe, the whole of creation]) - just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. (Colossians 1:6)”²⁶ Christ, who is often compared to a farmer, sowed the seed to four soils (Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-9). So, is there a biblical reason for forced conversion evangelism, such as the Watchtower Christian Society that was born in America, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the enthusiastic Christian organizations in South Korea? Wouldn’t we be ignoring the protocanonical books spoken by Christ, Paul and the Apostolic Age? In the Bible, “harvesting” is required rather than the act of evangelism, missionary, and conversion. (John 4:35). The gospel has already extended “to the ends of the world. (Romans 10:18)”²⁷ If you follow the “eschatology”²⁸, which is “premillennialism (the Second Coming before the Millennium)” that is the eschatology of Jesus’s second coming, the elitism that pagans will never be able to enter the new Kingdom of God will be developed. So, it will be the act to eliminate pagans. Like the Crusaders, it is heretical and aggressive. Even

²⁵ “Ecumenicity” (Web site of Kobe International Christ Church <http://kicc.sub.jp/ecumenisty/>). It shows the qualities and condition of being ecumenical. It is a Super-denomination or Super-denominationalism, which means a globally connected state of mutual confession.

²⁶ Verse 23 of the context is as follows: “If you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.” (Colossians 1:23)

“Every creature under heaven” (**πάση κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν** *pase te ktisei te hupo ton ouranon*) represents not only the Far East and Latin America, but also on a global scale, the entire universe.

²⁷ Regarding on the verse 10 of the context, the verbalist emphasizes, “Who would hear if there was no preacher?” They think that Evangelism is the God’s command (Matthew 28:19) Christ told to make a “disciple”, but it is not written that to go out for making a “converter”.

²⁸ In 1848, John Nelson Darby of the Church of the Brethren advocates the “Rapture” and the Second Coming of Christ in the Premillennial Kingdom of Jerusalem, based on the “The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation from the Original Languages by J.N. Darby”. Darby is the flag bearer of the evangelist and the teacher of verbal inspiration theory. (Ref. HP of Kobe International Christ Church. <http://kicc.sub.jp>)

they give physical restraint, (mental) torture, and forced conversion to others, they have no qualms about it as even if they had been burned their conscience. "Being patient" that Paul talks about in "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love", is the qualities that the Apostolic Age Christian group had. (Ephesians 4:2)

c. The Christian world that has eliminated heresy

The ecumenical council was held in 325 AD at Nicaea, West Turkey, which I visited on November 23. At that time, Nestorius [381-451] was the Patriarch of Constantinople [current Istanbul]. In 431, Nestorius opposed the title of "Mother of God/Theotokos" as a "Dyophysite" defender. He did not object to Christ having two natures and two materialities. Nonetheless, Cyril of Alexandria [376-444], a Doctor of the Church²⁹), dismissed, condemned, and expelled Nestorius at the 3rd Council of Ephesus³⁰.

As Nestorians, Assyrians, Ethiopians, and Indians who accepted Christ as a god, and the Oriental believers who accepted Jesus as a human being, they did not accept the Chalcedonian Definition [451 AD] and has been keeping their worship and Bible doctrine to this day. Wolfhart Pannenberg [1928-2014], who founded the Institute of Ecumenism at the University of Munich, made a particularization in "Christology" of both Nestorian and Cyril of Alexandria. Nestorius was ostracized as "Monophysitism" by Cyril of Alexandria, but still, it is unclear what was heresy. Pannenberg made a comment on it. "Attempts to force acceptance of the Chalcedonian Definition... Opened the opportunity for the first major denominational separation of Christianity... The controversy over the beliefs following the Chalcedonian Definition resulted in the weakening of the Christian empire. Eventually, with few battles, areas such as Syria, Palestine, and Egypt where Monophysitism grew popular, were handed over to Islam."³¹ Mizugaki Wataru, who was the chairman of the Japan Society of Christian Studies, told me after my return from Turkey that whether anyone could explain the controversy between the two groups correctly. The reason is that the terms that they used in both groups that are crashing each other cannot be translated accurately into Japanese³².

From renunciation of the war of the Apostolic Age to the Crusaders

Historian Roland H Bainton said, "There is no evidence that there were Christians in the military from the end of the New Testament era to about 170-180 AD"³³.

²⁹ Doctor of the Church is the title officially given to a writer who lives in a holy life with having an orthodox teaching and excellent knowledge by the Roman Catholic Church. It was given to Cyril of Alexandria in 1893. He was a radical religious leader who killed the female philosopher Hypatia [370-415].

1998. *New Catholic Encyclopedia II*. New Catholic Encyclopedia Compilation Committee, Research association. 278

³⁰ Mizugaki, W. Odaka, T (eds.). 2003. *A History of Christological Controversies*. The Board of Publications, the United Church of Christ in Japan. 146-168.

³¹ Pannenberg, W. 1964. *Grundzüge der Christologie*. Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn. (1982. Ikenaga Tomoaki [Translator]. 355)

³² Mr. Mizugaki Wataru is one of the founding executive members of the Kobe International Sustaining Organization. *Grundzüge der Christologie*. *ibid.*, 207-283.

When I was listening to systematic theology at the Kobe Reformed Theological Seminary in 1994, the principal Makita Yoshikazu also clearly stated that Nestorian's claim could not be said a heretical.

³³ Iwamura, Y. 2015. *Christianity and Pacifism - Let's throw away the armors-*. OCC College Lecture. 4-6.; Bainton, Roland H. 1963. *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation*. by Nakamura Taeko (Translator). Shinkyo Publishing. 83.; Craigie, Peter C. 2001. *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. Murata Michiya (Translator). Sugu Shyobo. 76-77.; Murata, M. 1996. *War and Biblical Peace*. SeikeiJyusanjixyo Shyupan. 83.; Augustinus, A. 1991. *On the city of God against the pagans V*. Hatori Eijiro (Translator). 57.

Christ himself said, "For all who draw the sword will die by the sword". (Matthew 26:52)

By Saint Ambrose [334-397], who first used the word "Mass", and Augustine [354-430], who is said to be the father of the theology of the Western Church, the view of war transformed 180 degrees from "renunciation of war" to "just war". Augustine, the father of Western theology, says there is a "right war" in the dispute with Donatism

Moreover, Pope Gregory VII [1020-1085] advocated the First Crusade (*praelia sancta*, holy war) at the Council of Clermont³⁴. Pope Urban II declared war as, "You all urgently must send reinforcements to your easter companions. The Turks, the inhabitants of Persia, are destroying the churches and playing havoc in the kingdom of God. Make those anathematic people vanished from our land completely"³⁵. The Crusaders' expedition had brought about an era of fruitless violence not only in Europe but also in the Middle East³⁶.

In the 11th and 13th centuries, the Roman Catholic Church has a history of the fierce invasion of the Islamic territories with the flag of the cross. Shioriji Kazuko, Especially, Appointed Professor at Tokyo International University, reported what the "crusade" had done. She said that, "Crusaders not only brutally killed Muslims, but also [Arab] Christians and Jews, and also, they burned dead bodies and ate it. This kind of barbaric act that cannot find in any other in world history has been testified."³⁷

American religious sociologist Rodney Stark [1934-] argues that the Crusades expedition was a self-defense act because Islam had overrun the Arab Orthodox and invaded Western Europe. In addition, he defends Crusaders that they were soldiers with pure sincere faith. In his book, he criticizes thoroughly Muslims as uncivilized people as "That is, the sophisticated culture so often attributed to Muslims (more often referred to as "Arabic" culture) was actually the culture of the conquered people- the Judeo-Christian-Greek culture of Byzantium, the remarkable learning of heretical Christian groups such as the Copts and the Nestorians, extensive knowledge from Zoroastrianism (Mazdean) Persia, and the great mathematical achievements of the Hindus (keep in mind the early and extensive Muslim conquests of India.)"³⁸ Rodney's reputation is circular reasoning. Muslims utilize the achievements of "A". Its leads that by the grace of "A", they could develop their medicine, science, and culture. It is because "A" is a Christian. Therefore, it is the line of argument that

Kondo, G. 2010. *Crusaders ideology*. The 45th Bible Seminar. 2.

³⁴ In that seminar, they quoted "*The Complaint of Peace, translated from the Querela Pacis (1517)*" of Desiderius Erasmus that "Almost any peace, no matter how incorrect it is, is better than the war which is the most justice one."

³⁵ Ikeya, F. 2014. *Pope Urban II and the Crusaders*. Yamakawa Shuppansha.

³⁶ Macquarrie, J. 2008. *The Concept of Peace*. Toubou Yoshinobu (Translator). Shinkyō Publishing. 59.

"It is often that 'Peace' is understood as just a thing to calms the conflict without changing the status quo."

³⁷ K. Armstrong. 1991. *Holy War the Crusades and their Impact on Today's World*, Shiojiri, K. 2016. *What did the Crusaders bring to Islam?* Bungeishunju. 155. 1991. R H Bainton, 1963. *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation*. Nakamura Taeko (Translator). Shinkyō Publishing. 83, 144-145. 2016. *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants* a Christian historian at Yale University, recorded the crusader's atrocities as "In Solomon's Temple and portico, crusaders kept marching while drenching themselves in the blood up to their knees and the bridles of horses."

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of "ISIL: Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant" stated himself as a Caliph and carried terrorist activities in Iraq and Syria. In a speech record released in May 2016, former ISIS highest leader and spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani called Muslims throughout the Middle East to stand against the Jews, "crusade soldiers", and "renegade" spies who in somewhere in the region. In his speech, he begged believers around the world to "use terrorism" and "punish the crusade soldiers (i.e., Westerners)" by executing terrorist attacks, and he gave advises, "It is more favorable and effective for us to target those people who are called 'civilians'. Because, civilians are more harmful and bring more pain, and it will be a greater deterrent to 'Kaffir, Westerners'".

³⁸ Stark, R. 2016. *God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades*. Sakurai Yasuto (Translator). 87.

Muslims were excluded because they were uncivilized. Rodney's big mistake is that "A" ostracizes them as "heresy" rather than orthodoxy.

He forgot that the medicine, astronomy, and mathematics contained in Islam rather contributed to the West. It is a dualistic idea that preserves "the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order", which was published by the American political scientist, Samuel Phillips Huntington in 1993. As long as agrees with a world view like him, the era of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam coexist will not come. It interferes with Christ's ἀνακεφαλαίω *anakephalaio* (means "to sum up all things"). (Ephesians 1:10) It means that it's an enemy of "peace".

People all over the world trembled to see the news that Islamic extremism "ISIL" accused Western countries and the coalition countries of "crusade", and burned prisoners to die. However, regarding the past and present "crusade", jihad³⁹ and barbaric action, such as oppression of Christians by ISIL, it requires a historical recognition, that is, "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9) The Christian world must not forget that the traditional Western Confessing Church did nothing but conducted a forced conversion while despised people of other religions, Islam, Arab Orthodox, Native Americans in North America, and the Inca Empire.

During the Meiji Restoration, there were conditions for hiring foreign missionaries from the American Board. "It is necessary to believe in the belief that the souls of foreigners who believe in Christianity will be a subject to eternal punishment. Those who do not believe in this doctrine, they would never be recommended to be a missionary."⁴⁰

It is not possible to discuss in the same way between intolerant Christianity that force to convert people and don't give a "baptism" if the person doesn't burn its family Buddhist altar, and tolerant Arab Orthodox. The latter did not exclude pagans such as Islam. The Ecumenical Movement is a super-denominationalism activity among believers in Christ. Ecumenicity, on the other hand, it doesn't undervalue other religious people's worship, doctrine, and spirituality, and it does "Kyosei (共生: Life together)"⁴¹.

Protestant theologian Paul Tillich [1886-1965] says the importance of these issues that lie down in the danger of direct relationship, which does not break link between politics and religion. He pointed out the dangers in Christian theology that, "In the American situation, for one thing, if still there remains a peace-seeking atmosphere, we could repeatedly deny the war. Otherwise, we might continue to justify the war. Through the propaganda during the war, the spirit of the Crusades has lifted."⁴²

(3) Christianity in the Middle East

a. Arab Orthodox of 2000

Arab Orthodox continues to do "Kyosei (共生: Life together)" by Ecumenicity in the Islamic world.

³⁹ Iwamura, Y. 2015. *Misunderstanding toward Islam*. Article 6 Meimai no Kai News. No.22. Minnade Kangaeru 9 Jyo Meimai no Kai.

In the original nature of jihad, the first priority is not the "Holy war" but the effort to overcome the conflict inside of oneself.

⁴⁰ 1915. Kubushiro, N. *Constructive Christology*. Shinjin Vol.16. No.11.47-48.

⁴¹ 1982. *The Middle Eastern Churches*. Newsletter No.8 Nov. Arab Christians in Relation to their Muslim Co-Citizens and Neighbors. 51. Other essays can be referred through MECC (Middle East Council of Churches). *History of Middle East Christianity*. 68.

⁴² Tillich, P. 2003. *Theology of Peace*. Shinkyō Publishing. 98-99. (Original: Westminster John Knox Press. 1990)

Father Jean Corbon, a theologian from Lebanon, says “It explains by the word ‘Church of Arab (L’Eglise des Arabes)’, a church to do witness among the Arabs, ‘a church for the world’, and simply not narcissistic church,every political choice can be decided freely by each Christians. Political pluralism is not only accepted but recommended.⁴³” Unfortunately, the Western Christian community sees “Ecumenicity = harmonious relationship” with the Arab Orthodox by Islam as an obstacle. They cannot understand the identity of the Arab Orthodox. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have a common denominator of “People of the Book”. Also, in the Arab Orthodox, the church has lived and had dialogues with its neighbors and fellow Islamic citizens in every way. Among Arab Orthodox theologians, some have pioneered a theological dialogue with Islamic religious thoughts. Ecclesia of the Arab Orthodox has empathized with the hardships of all Arabs in the Middle east, the tragedy of Palestine, and the Syrian refugees as their own pain.

b. From Ecumenical to Ecumenicity

Some Arab Orthodox churches welcomed the spread of Islam when it was born in the 7th century, as that will connect to their “liberation”. In fact, in the Islamic community, they were given the status of “protected person (ahl al-dhimma)”. Since the 8th century, both Islamic and Arab Orthodox believers have engaged in cultural and intellectual dialogue. They developed Islamic philosophy, science, thoughts, and theological debates. The Arab Orthodox interpreted Muhammad as “walking the path of the Prophets (Saluk fi sabilul Anbiya) and had given a great influence on the Islamic teachers (Sufis).

Arai Masami, a historian specializing in modern Turkish history, indicated her understandings that “According to what Gregory Palamas, the archbishop of Thessaloniki (Thessalonica) in the middle of the 14th century, wrote that ‘the Turks’ recognized the Arab Orthodox as the same followers of monotheistic religion, and ultimately they thought that is the same religion of Islam.” And also, she points out on page 13 of the same book that, “Under the Ottoman-domain society, the “Kyosei (共生: Life together)” of Muslims and Christians was naturally realized.”

c. “Kyosei (共生: Life together)” of People of the Book

“Super-ethnic perspective”: the spiritual and religious self-consciousness of transcendental beings on the doctrine of creation is common to the three major religions in the world; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Since the end of the 13th century, under the Ottoman-domain societies, it was natural thing the coexistence of Islam and Eastern Christian believers. In other words, multi-religious and multi-language stood to reason⁴⁴.

For example, an awareness of halal foods since Islam believers do not eat pork is becoming more and more. However, it is written at Al Maidah 5:5 in the “Quran” (formally known as “the holy Qur’an”) as follows. “This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you. The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them.” So, it is not as strict as Jewish kashrut, it is fine to eat pork that is served at the table by the Arab Orthodox followers whose religious text defines the Old Testament as “the Book”. Regarding marriage, in the same verse, it admits that people of the same “book” can marry, for example, it admits to marrying Christian women, even if they have a different religion. It allows marriage

⁴³ 1993. *History of Middle East Christianity*. Murayama Moriyoshi, 小田原盛忠 (Joint translation). Middle East Council of Churches. The Board of Publications, the United Church of Christ in Japan. 73.

⁴⁴ Arai, M. 2002. *The Ottoman Empire VS. Europe*. Kodansha-Metier. 83

between a different religious believer as, “(Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book, revealed before your time, - when ye give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues if anyone rejects faith, fruitless is his work.⁴⁵”

The Roman Catholic Church has been intolerantly overrun in the Islamic world, destroy mosques and built churches on top of it. John Paul II [1920-2005. Native from Poland] conducted the Mass to ask for forgiveness on March 12, 2000, that “We are asking pardon for the divisions among Christians, for the use of violence that some have committed in the service of truth, and for attitudes of mistrust and hostility assumed toward followers of other religions.⁴⁶”

Murata Michiya, a sociologist, indicated to return to a basic focus on common denominator as, “Religious leaders, in any kinds of religions, should make efforts to send policy-makers and believers who wish for peace and justice into the world. Even in Palestine, it is said that there was a time when Jews and Muslims, Islam and Judaism believers were living together. Perhaps, in a sense, religious leaders and policy-makers at that time did not want to resort to violence and dealt with the problem through ‘dialogue’, and kept their attitude of listening to the truth of other religions.⁴⁷”

The American poet Eliza Griswold travels around the conflict area in the world as a journalist, and she describes the deep relationship of the two religions, Christianity and Islam. She said, “I also know that Muhammad was kicked out of his village and stoned in Ta’if, but he kept silence and headed to Medina (Al Madinah Al Munawwarah)”. According to Muhammad’s “Hadith”, in 619 AD, he traveled to Ta’if, which is a town at the foot of the Arabian Peninsula and about 110 km southeast of Mecca. Farmers threw stones instead of welcoming him and intended to kick him out even he was full of blood. After that, the Archangel Gabriel (Jibril in Arabic) appeared to the Prophet Muhammad and asked him whether he wishes to revenge against the people of Ta’if or not. The Prophet prayed while wiping away blood on his face as “Lord, forgive them, they don’t just don’t know”, and refused retaliation. Muhammad knew Jesus and his teachings, and before he died, he instructed his followers to die happily for faith like Jesus. The words of Muhammad were just as same as Jesus’s crying at the crucified, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing⁴⁸.”

<Conclusion>

American missionaries come to the Middle East for evangelism, cross-cultural exchange, and refugee support. However, the Islamic society in the Middle East, which desperately wants sufficient financial assistant, doesn’t have “*Jyuen-Ryoku* (受縁力:attitude to accept help/relationship)”. Through this Turkey visit, then welcome to “Kayoko Foundation” volunteers for orphans was beyond our imagination. Despite being indecisive Islamic world, Turkey stands firm in Religious pluralism.

I realized that role of religion is huge in areas that face an immediate crisis, such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the capital relocation of the United States embassy to Jerusalem, and the Syrian refugee issue. I got

⁴⁵ 2016. *The holy qur'an*. Islam International Publications. 317.

⁴⁶ 2000. NHK. March 13. 6am.

⁴⁷ Murata, M. *Peace of War and Bible*. Koyo Shobo. 201-202.

⁴⁸ Griswold, E. 2010. *The Tenth Parallel - Dispatches from the Fault Line Between Christianity and Islam*. Straus & Giroux, LLC. (2011. Shirasu Hideko [Translator]. Iwamura Yoshio [ed.]. HakusuiSha)

a clue that probably Japan could take the burden of mediation so that the people of the Book - the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian would stop fighting each other and seats at a table to “*Kyosei* (共生: Life together)”. By working through civil diplomacy rather than politicians, we will be able to reach reconciliation. Especially in the world of children, there are no profits or losses, strategies, or conniving tactics. The work of orphan supporting removes the wall of distrust. The wisdom of 2,000 years of Arab Orthodox is essential. I could make a promise of the three-way conversation with Islamic missionaries and Jewish rabbi to hold on January 23, 2021, after my return from Turkey. I start walking little by little, like a snail.

“They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.” (Micah 4:3)

“Wisdom Literature” of the Dead Sea Scrolls tells us that, “Truly, behold, he burgeons from the land like grass. His beauty blooms like flowers. (But) when his wind blows, its roots die...it behooves for Love, and to your soul. You should seek the path to life⁴⁹.” Let’s explore the way to live together with others in our limited life.

The following week, Mr. Murata Jyuhachi, director of the Kobe International Sustaining Organization, proofread my sermon. Also, I would like to thank to translator Ms. Tokudome Yumi, Ms. Sasaki Miwa, Ms. Yukiko Dote, and Ms. Naomi Miyoshi of our office staff for improving unclear parts of this sermon.

⁴⁹ *The Dead Sea Scrolls X: Wisdom Literature*. *ibid.*,181-182.